

Afko's  
Anna-Bella Papp  
9 February - 30 March

I first visited Anna-Bella Papp in her studio a little over a year ago. Papp had her working space in the former building where the gallery was located, in Amsterdam Zuid. During that visit, I remember seeing many different bodies of work that she had just brought over from the EKWC, probably the most famous ceramic residency in Europe. There, she had been researching with the material she has been working with for most of her career, clay. Rather than creating her signature hand-sculpted, tablet-like forms made from unfired clay, she had been experimenting with different ways of treating the material.

Displayed on a large table were variously styled bricks, while another table held delicate, disintegrating straw hats. In our first conversation, it was not very clear to me what Anna-Bella's interest were, these pieces puzzled me. The bricks were detailed trompe-l'œil's that copied the ones she found in the vicinity of her studio in Oisterwijk, an area that was being quickly redeveloped. The hats were sculptures that took her far from her usual hand-made style into experimentation with 3D printing with clay, an experimental field that is still in development and that was as uncertain as the future of those pieces. These bodies of work were, while still working with her characteristic material, a different way of approaching it.

Months later, I visited Papp in her new studio, conveniently located a mere ten minutes from my relocated gallery—a serendipitous proximity. This time, she shared insights into a film project and her in-depth research collaboration with the clay mine producing her preferred clay type. Yet, her iconic hand-sculpted forms were notably absent.

This exhibition reintroduces these signature forms. On this occasion the works are presented on temporary tables on top of garden tables. This new arrangement not only highlights their intricate technical and mark-making processes but also emphasizes their dynamic existence within their surrounding environment.

Afko's consists of works linked to popular abbreviations in the Randstad. Their forms are contracted for fast and effective communication, and recognisable even before entering social media platforms. Their content is seen across already existing images that generate hype around things, places, lifestyles and people.

Predicting the effects of its own presence in Bos en Lommer the gallery offers a space to reflect on transformation processes and their patterns. If Papp's sculpting process is one of extreme care and precision, moving between representation and abstraction, her exhibition-making process has been more of a dialogue with the space, her work, and the conditions it can exist in.

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Anna-Bella Papp was born in Chişineu-Criş, Romania, in 1988. She lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. She studied at the University of Art and Design, Cluj, Romania (2007–2010), at de Ateliers, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2011–2013) and at the Sandberg Instituut, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2020-2021).

Anna-Bella Papp presented her first solo museum exhibition at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX, USA, in 2014. Since then she has had solo exhibitions at Modern Art, London (2019, 2015, 2013) Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, Milan, Italy (2017); De Ateliers (Amsterdam Art Weekend), Amsterdam, Netherlands (2016); Spazio Cabinet, Milan, Italy (2016); and Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway (2015). She has participated in important group exhibitions such as the São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2021) or Home is a Foreign Place, MET, US (2021).

Her work is part of the different collections such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Nasher Sculpture Center or Dallas Museum of Art in the US, Kadist Art Foundation or Lafayette Anticipations in France and many private collections.